



Glasgow City Council

City Administration Committee

Report by Bailie Annette Christie, City Convener for Culture, Sport and International Relations

Item 3

27th February 2025

Contact: Andrew Olney Ext: 74350

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF SPORT AT BELLAHOUSTON ACADEMY

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Committee with an overview of the current position of the Glasgow School of Sport (GSOS) and to set out the proposed future support to Glasgow's talented young sportspeople.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to recommend that:

- 1) Following a service review of the GSOS undertaken by Glasgow Life and Education Services, the GSOS model is transitioned over a period until June 2026, to a programme of support that enables Glasgow's talented young sportspeople to fully engage with the performance and excellence programmes delivered by the respective sport National Governing Bodies and Sports Clubs,
- 2) A proposed sports bursary programme is developed to provide financial support for Glasgow's talented sports performers. This will be developed by Education Services and Glasgow Life for launch in June 2026,

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Glasgow School of Sport (GSOS) is Scotland's only school dedicated to sporting excellence providing the opportunity for young people in Scotland to develop their sporting talents as part of their school education. Opened in 1998 the GSOS is located at Bellahouston Academy in Glasgow. There are over 1100 pupils at the school, of whom 65 are “GSOS pupils” specialising in one of five sports – athletics, badminton, gymnastics, hockey, or swimming. Pupils specialise in one sport and entry to the GSOS is available to young people from across Scotland by selection only. The GSOS is run as a partnership between Glasgow City Council Education Services and Glasgow Life. Balancing a timetable of sporting and academic studies, GSOS pupils undertake a programme of dedicated sports coaching within their academic school week.
- 1.2 The current GSOS model was introduced 25 years ago when it was opened in 1999. At this time (1999) the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) for these sports were not in a strong position to drive performance sport forward. The GSOS sport model has not been formally reviewed despite significant changes to the role of the Scottish Institute of Sport (SIS) and the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) for sport over the years. Through the alignment of funding to the development of professional coaching and support teams, they now have the ability and capacity to lead in the provision of national performance and excellence sports programmes. These are the programmes that support young sportspeople achieve selection and represent Scotland and Great Britain at international events and tournaments.
- 1.3 This shift and the importance of NGBs driving forward the performance agenda reached a point where a service review needed to be undertaken in line with NGBs provision of performance pathways and whether the GSOS model remains relevant in the current environment.

2. CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 The GSOS is run as a partnership between Glasgow City Council Education Services and Glasgow Life. Balancing a timetable of sporting and academic studies, GSOS pupils undertake between 9 – 14 periods of dedicated sports coaching within their academic school week.
- 2.2 The GSOS performance programmes is limited to five sports, (athletics, badminton, gymnastics, hockey, and swimming). Currently the school has 65 pupils attending. With attendance not limited to Glasgow based pupils, 40 pupils (62%) attend from across 12 other Local Authority areas. Across the five sports the numbers of pupils attending are:-

Athletics	15
Badminton	10
Gymnastics	13

Hockey	8
Swimming	19

Appendix 1 lists the local authorities where pupils attending the GSOS come from.

- 2.3 Recognising the attendance of pupils from other Local Authority areas, the Chief Executive of Glasgow Life and GCC's Executive Director of Education Services wrote to the 12 local authorities to request financial support to continue the programme. The Chair of Glasgow Life and City Convenor for Education Services also wrote to the Scottish Government seeking financial support for the School of Sport given its scope and reach is wider than the City of Glasgow. These requests have proved unsuccessful, with the both the Scottish Government and local authorities indicating they were not able to provide financial support.
- 2.4 It was agreed whilst conversations were taking place with Local Authorities and Scottish Government, there would be no intake of pupils for the 2024/25 academic year. This information was communicated to the GSOS staff and in turn to existing parents of pupils at the school and prospective pupils/parents and guardians that had shown an interest in applying for entry in August 2024.
- 2.5 Consultation has taken place with sportscotland, Scottish Institute of Sport and the relevant National Governing Bodies to establish views on the current GSOS model and explore any potential future delivery options. Through these discussions it has been confirmed none of these organisations are able to financially support the GSOS, with their focus being on their performance and excellence programmes. With no alternative funding having been secured, discussions are ongoing with the NGBs to identify how they can provide support to the sport performance for GSOS pupils if the GSOS is no longer operational.
- 2.6 The 2023/24 cost for the operation of the GSOS by Glasgow Life was £767.9k and was not included in the service fee from Glasgow City Council. Education Services currently provide a £52k budget to GSOS to spend on supplies and services each financial year. The Glasgow Life budget supports salaries for the GSOS team. In addition to the £52K budget to GSOS, Education Services cover the cost of delivering the formal education to participants. At present only 37% of pupils live within GCC authority area – the other 63% come from 12 other Scottish local authority areas. With secondary school education costing approximately £9,500 per pupil this equates to Glasgow spending circa £380k on the education of non-Glasgow pupils each school session.
- 2.7 With no recruitment of new pupils for academic year 24/25, time has been afforded to develop an appropriate performance pathway to support talented school age sports performers from Glasgow. This work includes dialogue with NGBs relating to their talent development pathways and programmes. If the

decision is taken to withdraw from the current GSOS model, it is proposed to have a transition programme up to the end of June 2026 in place to support the young people with their academic studies and sports training.

- 2.8 Pupils already attending the GSOS will continue their sports programmes through the transition period supported by the NGBs and Glasgow Life. All GSOS pupils will be able to continue their education at Bellahouston after June 2026 if they wish to do so.

3. SERVICE TRANSITION

- 3.1 It is recommended that over a two-year transition period until June 2026, the GSOS model is transitioned to a programme of support that enables Glasgow's talented young sportspeople to fully engage with the performance and excellence programmes delivered by the respective sport NGBs and Sports Clubs. Pupils who choose to, will continue to study at Bellahouston over the next two years, with pupil athlete plans developed for each individual.
- 3.2 This shift in provision to NGBs will ensure standardisation, expert driven guidelines and a fostering of fairness and excellence. It also aligns with broader national sport strategies, optimising talent development and enhancing competitiveness on a larger scale.
- 3.3 The GSOS venue at Bellahouston Academy will be incorporated into current provision at Bellahouston Academy.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW SPORTS BURSARY

- 4.1 Currently there is an existing Talented Sports Performer (TSP) scheme run by Glasgow Life which supports athletes living in Glasgow through access to the city's world class training facilities. Currently 143 Glasgow athletes are part of the programme through having competed in the past twelve months or can demonstrate they will be competing in the next 12 months at a national level in a sport recognised by sportscotland. The current TSP will be used as the foundation for the new bursary scheme.
- 4.2 In order to support young talented sports people living in Glasgow to have access to national sports performance programmes, it is proposed the concept of a joint Education Services and Glasgow Life sports bursary programme is developed for approval. Education Services currently have a budget of £52k aligned to the Glasgow School of Sport that can be allocated to support a Sports Bursary programme. If adopted this funding can be used to support talented performers from a wide range of sports and potentially be targeted to young people who require the greatest financial support to maintain their sports programme. This will be developed by GCC Education Services and Glasgow Life for launch in June 2026.

5. POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Financial

The GL GSOS cost for 2023/24 was £767.9k, including a payroll budget of £743.9k, the equivalent of 12.92 FTE staff.

Annually Education Services contribute an additional £52k to the GSOS budget.

Glasgow Life budget requirements for 2024 – 2027 are set out below:

2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
£805.2k*	£845.5k*	£369.8k*
		Pro rata cost for 5 months in line with academic year. No cost 27/28 and beyond

*Pay inflation built in

Legal

N/A

Personnel

Budgeted FTE is 12.92.

Staff are aware that the intake of new pupils has been put on hold whilst the service review is undertaken

In line with Glasgow Life's people principles a collective consultation process with staff and trade unions would be undertaken. All options and opportunities will be explored with staff, including redeployment. ER/VR will be considered for individuals where their post is part of a planned reduction, and there is no suitable alternative role for them.

Procurement

N/A

Council Strategic Plan:

Specify which Grand Challenge (s) and Mission (s) the proposal supports. Where appropriate the relevant Commitment can also be listed.

Grand Challenge 2 - Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens. Mission 3

Grand Challenge 1 - Reduce poverty and inequalities in our communities. Mission 3 and Mission 4

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify

Outcome 14 - improving outcomes education

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

Positive impact

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

Yes by widening support to a broader audience

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

No

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

NA

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

NA

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

No

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to note that:

- 1) Following a service review of the GSOS undertaken by Education Services and Glasgow Life, the GSOS model is transitioned over a period until June 2026, to a programme of support that enables Glasgow's talented young sportspeople to fully engage with the performance and excellence programmes delivered by the respective sport NGB's and Sports Clubs,
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